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In the Claims:

For the Examiner's convenience, all pending claims are presented below with changes shown in accordance with the mandatory format. Please cancel claims 15-30.

1. (Original) A method, comprising:

receiving a first data being written to a data block on a first storage volume;

indicating the data block being stored on a second storage image, the indication information being associated with a first storage image which is a copy on write snapshot; and

writing the first data to the data block on the second storage image.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the indicating comprises:

determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image; and

updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the second storage image, if the data block is stored on the first storage image.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the determining and updating comprise:

examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image; and

deleting the entry associated with the data block if the entry exists.

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before indicating the data block being
stored on a second storage image; and
releasing the lock after writing the first data to the data block on the second
storage image.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the lock mechanism is
maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a second data being written to the data block on a second storage
volume;
updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the
second storage image;
replicating an existing data stored on the data block of the second storage image
to the first storage image; and
writing the second data to the data block on the second storage image.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the updating comprises:

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image; and
updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the
second storage image, if the data block is stored on the first storage image.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the determining and
updating comprise:

examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block,
the lookup table being associated with the first storage image; and
creating the entry associated with the data block if the entry does not exist.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before updating the indication
information; and

releasing the lock after writing the second data.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the lock mechanism is
maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a request to read from a data block on the first storage volume;

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image or on the second storage image, based on indication information associated with the first storage image;

reading the data block from the first storage image if the data block is stored on the first storage image; and

reading the data block from the second storage image if the data block is stored on the second storage image.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image or on the second storage image; and

releasing the lock after reading the data block from the second storage image.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the lock mechanism is maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

15. (Original) A machine-readable medium having executable code to cause a machine to perform a method, the method comprising:

receiving a first data being written to a data block on a first storage volume;

indicating the data block being stored on a second storage image, the indication information being associated with a first storage image which is a copy on write snapshot; and

writing the first data to the data block on the second storage image.

16. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the indicating comprises:

determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image; and

updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the second storage image, if the data block is stored on the first storage image.

17. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the determining and updating comprise:

examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image; and

deleting the entry associated with the data block if the entry exists.

18. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises:

acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before indicating the data block being stored on a second storage image; and

releasing the lock after writing the first data to the data block on the second storage image.

19. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 18, wherein the lock mechanism is maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

20. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a second data being written to the data block on a second storage volume;

updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the second storage image;

replicating an existing data stored on the data block of the second storage image to the first storage image; and

writing the second data to the data block on the second storage image.

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

21. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the updating comprises:

determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image; and
updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the second storage image, if the data block is stored on the first storage image.

22. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 21, wherein the determining and updating comprise:

examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image; and
creating the entry associated with the data block if the entry does not exist.

23. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises:

acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before updating the indication information; and

releasing the lock after writing the second data to the data block on the second storage image.

24. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 23, wherein the lock mechanism is maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.
Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

25. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a request to read from a data block on the first storage volume;

determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image or on the second storage image, based on indication information associated with the first storage image;

reading the data block from the first storage image if the data block is stored on the first storage image; and

reading the data block from the second storage image if the data block is stored on the second storage image.

26. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the method further comprises examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image.

27. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the method further comprises:

acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image or on the second storage image; and

releasing the lock after reading the data block from the second storage image.

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

28. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the lock mechanism is maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

29. (Original) An apparatus, comprising:
means for receiving a first data being written to a data block on a first storage volume;
means for indicating the data block being stored on a second storage image, the indication information being associated with a first storage image which is a copy on write snapshot; and
means for writing the first data to the data block on the second storage image.

30. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the means for indicating comprises:

means for determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image;
and
means for updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the second storage image, if the data block is stored on the first storage image.

31. (Original) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the means for determining and means for updating comprise:
Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

means for examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image; and means for deleting the entry associated with the data block if the entry exists.

32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:
means for acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before indicating indicating the data block being stored on a second storage image; and
means for releasing the lock after writing the first data to the data block on the second storage image.

33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the lock mechanism is maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

34. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:
means for receiving a second data being written to the data block on a second storage volume;
means for updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored on the second storage image;
means for replicating an existing data stored on the data block of the second storage image to the first storage image; and

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

means for writing the second data to the data block on the second storage image.

35. (Original) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the means for updating comprises:

means for determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image;
and

means for updating the indication information to indicate the data block is stored
on the second storage image, if the data block is stored on the first storage image.

36. (Original) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the means for
determining and means for updating comprise:

means for examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the
data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image; and

means for creating the entry associated with the data block if the entry does not
exist.

37. (Original) The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising:
means for acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before updating the indication
information; and

means for releasing the lock after writing the second data.

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

38. (Original) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the lock mechanism is maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

39. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:
means for receiving a request to read from a data block on the first storage volume;

means for determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image or on a second storage image, based on indication information associated with the first storage image;

means for reading the data block from the first storage image if the data block is stored on the first storage image; and

means for reading the data block from the second storage image if the data block is stored on the second storage image.

40. (Original) The apparatus of claim 39, further comprising means for examining a lookup table whether there is an entry associated with the data block, the lookup table being associated with the first storage image.

41. (Original) The apparatus of claim 39, further comprising:

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

means for acquiring a lock from a lock mechanism before determining whether the data block is stored on the first storage image or on a second storage image; and

means for releasing the lock after reading the data block from the second storage image.

42. (Original) The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the lock mechanism is maintained independent to the first and the second storage images.

43. (Original) A data storage system, comprising:
a processing system; and
a memory coupled to the processing system, the memory storing instructions, which when executed by the processing system, cause the processing system to perform the operations of:

receiving a first data being written to a data block on a first storage volume;
indicating the data block being stored on a second storage image, the indication information being associated with a first storage image which is a copy on write snapshot; and
writing the first data to the data block on the second storage image.

44.-68 (Cancelled)

Atty Docket No. 82225P8377
Application No. 10/748,104

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